

Mois Saltiel At The Time When He Worked At The Fire Brigade



This is me when I was in the Fire Brigade [from 1953 until 1979]. The picture was taken in Sofia in the 1970s.

For 16 years I worked as an editor of the 'Protivopojarna Ohrana' [Fire Brigade] magazine, I contributed to many Bulgarian dailies, radio and television in the area of fire prevention.

I want to tell some anecdotes of how my Jewish origin influenced the attitude towards me at my work place. After 9th September 1944 I had a responsible job at the Ministry of Internal Affairs. But there was an order at that time, which started in the Soviet Union and came to Bulgaria, which said that people who keep in touch with relatives abroad cannot work for the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

My colleagues respected me very much and wanted me to keep my job, but the management pressed them to fire me, because I was a Jew and had relatives in Israel. So, a friend of mine told me, 'Listen, you will not survive long here in State Security around such people. Let me transfer you to another job, where you will survive. I can appoint you as a deputy director of the Fire Prevention Service Bureau. Do you want to go there?' I agreed, because I was tired of fighting.

In 1953 I started working in the Fire Prevention Service. I worked there for 26 years and a half. I worked in the system of the ministry more than 36 years. I had one more conflict when I worked in the Fire Prevention Service. In 1957 during the war between Egypt and Israel the attitudes towards Israel here were very negative and strong.

I said to a neighbor ironically, 'These 'brothers' the Arabs, who you Bulgarians regard as brothers, will play a bad trick on you. You should be careful about them...' He wrote a report to the ministry and they started questioning people trying to prove that I was a Zionist - I have never been a Zionist -, that I was saying bad things about our friends, the Arabs.

At that time the Interior Minister was a man who had been a prisoner in the Skopje prison with me, Angel Solakov. The deputy minister was Vladimir Borachev. They told me that I was doing a very good job, but I must not remain there. They sent me to a lower position, although I was paid the same salary. That was the second case. Although I retired in that system, I was continuously appointed to more and more insignificant positions, although I received the same money.